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# Rap and Produce: A Thematic Communication Program

Paul Schulte

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Rap and Produce: A Thematic  
Communication Program.

by  
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June 3, 1975

Advisor: R. Roger Remington

*Approved 6/9/1975*  
Name Illegible

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Thesis Committee

R. Roger Remington

Robert S. Kerr

Mrs. Jesse James

Acknowledgement

I would like to extend a very sincere thanks to Grace Law and Jesse James, who made this project a very meaningful and enjoyable experience.

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## Introduction

Rap and Produce is a unique program that provides a format for human interaction in communication, concerning grassroots level citizens and resource people in areas such as government, housing, health etc. It is unique in that its planning and operation are conducted by community persons of many different persuasions and backgrounds.

Because of the unique character of Rap and Produce there was a need to create an image which reflected this uniqueness. This thesis covers the concept and development of the Rap and Produce image and its practical applications used in the 1975 Conference.

### Background of Rap and Produce

Rap and Produce was founded in 1971 by Mrs. Jesse James and Grace Law. Its objective was to give people from diverse occupations and economic backgrounds, an opportunity to express their concerns on community and governmental problems.

The mechanism for making this opportunity for community involvement possible was the formation of the annual "Rap and Produce Conference". The Conference is composed of a series of workshops which bring together community residents, providers of services from community agencies and local decision makers.

Each year the Conference workshops highlight several areas of pressing community concern, and attempt to come out of each workshop session with possible community action and solutions geared to the problem. Participants are recruited from different sections of the community. A special effort is made to reach the poor since their voices are the least heard. There is a \$10 registration fee which is waived for Senior Citizens. Scholarships are also available so that everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Rap and Produce is an Extended Service of the Rochester Institute of Technology. RIT sponsors this program each year with the help of a co-sponsor which changes from year to year.



## History

In 1971 the first Rap and Produce Conference was held, with 200 city residents, service providers and decision-makers who came together to discuss the problems of the poor in Rochester. Each yearly conference deals with a different theme. Subsequent yearly conferences have increased the enrollment of registrants (rising from 550 in 1974 to 700 in 1975) and have been evaluated as highly successful and beneficial to the participants as interviewed by independent consultants.

Emphasis has been placed on results, as well as quality of information conveyed. Documented results of the conferences include the appointment of minority representatives to key local and state governmental committees, the appointment of a liaison between party headquarters and the minority community of Rochester by a major political party, and a minority person being appointed to judgeship for the first time in local history. In other areas, the conferences have been widely credited with providing a forum through which a variety of local issues and problems arising among community interest groups have been successfully involved in the creation of RIT's Urbanarium program for custom built demand-response citizen education. Last year's conference spawned follow-up activities in several areas, one of which was the conducting of a specialized full day workshop in legislative

process playing various roles in the criminal-justice community.

### Rationale

Why is Rap and Produce such a unique program?

1. Prior to Rap and Produce there were no meaningful forums existing for the community (grassroots etc.) to voice their opinions.
2. Up until now, no real attempt was made for a knowledgeable exchange between those with power and those without.
3. This was the first attempt at objective and constructive approach to change.
4. Rap and Produce were the first to attempt to involve large numbers of people in community action, without special group affiliation.
5. Rap and Produce is an unstructured organization.
6. This is the only program which gives recognition to the unattached volunteer.
7. The program established a scholarship aid based on Rap and Produce principles, enabling the elderly and poor to participate.

### Objectives of Thesis

The original objective of my thesis was to create a new identity for Rap and Produce which could be applied to various situations. The symbol was then to be applied to the annual Rap and Produce Conference. As planning began for the new symbol and its applications, a problem arose concerning the new symbol. Because they are an Extended Service of RIT, the RIT symbol was the one Rap and Produce had to use, and an additional identity symbol could not be designed or implemented. This was not a concern at the beginning stages of my thesis because previous programs similar to Rap and Produce had no restrictions on additional identities.

After discussing the problem with Mr. David Barringer and Mr. Gene Deprez of Communications Group, Public Affairs Division, RIT, it was determined that I could design a symbol for the Rap and Produce Conference which would be used as a thematic image for the conference. This image then, would not conflict with the RIT symbol.

My objectives then were:

1. to research past and present involvements and operations of Rap and Produce
2. to develop a thematic image for Rap and Produce's fifth conference
3. to define communication needs for the conference and produce them.

### Design Concept

**Research:** Initially, I researched the history and past involvements of Rap and Produce. I found that as a program it is very unique in that although it has goals, objectives etc. it is a very flexible, unstructured organization. Combining this flexibility with the interaction of grassroots citizens and resource persons, Rap and Produce is highly distinctive.

In order to have a full understanding of how Rap and Produce works and what it is about, I attended several planning meetings which were held at different locations in the city of Rochester. The meetings were held for the purposes of:

1. selecting workshops
2. organizing volunteers to head the workshops
3. setting up objectives for the workshops
4. collecting resource people to supplement information for the workshops.

Subsequent meetings dealt with the structure and organization of the conference. Among topics discussed were speakers, time and place and theme for the conference.

**Concept:** From these meetings I was able to understand the essential aspects of Rap and Produce. Because of the people who make Rap and Produce work, I considered the human element to be important to communicate in the image.

Secondly, because person-to-person interaction is the key to the operation and success of Rap and Produce, I felt it was important to communicate in the graphic image.



The Image

**Analysis:** Once I arrived at the concept, I had to translate it into a graphic form. I used a word/symbol analysis which helped me determine the elements that would communicate the concept clearly.

This word/symbol analysis involved the process of listing words which conveyed the important aspects of Rap and Produce. Symbols were then drawn which would reflect these aspects (Figure 1). After drawing a variety of symbols, I selected the most effective elements and combined those to form a rough symbol. This symbol was then graphically refined into a formal state.

This analysis was used because it was a logical, yet creative, method to determine what forms and shapes would best communicate the concept. By using this method I collected a variety of elements which created many more possible solutions.

**Development:** The development of the image originated with two head shapes facing each other. Several different vertical line intervals were worked within the head shapes to convey the concept of interaction (Figure 2). Although the vertical intervals were interesting, the total shape of the symbol wasn't working, because of a figure ground problem. Negative and positive was worked with, but still the

symbol wasn't working graphically (Figure 3). I then tried using horizontal intervals which were worked within the head shapes. The horizontal lines solved my figure ground problem because the whole shape of the image worked as a total figure against the ground. It also conveyed the interaction concept more powerfully (Figure 4).

After a rough image was arrived at, I proceeded to refine the head shapes so that they read as a human form and not as something inanimate.

My final solution incorporated an interval visual system with the two head shapes. The intervals communicated interaction and the head shapes provided the human element (Figure 5).

**Color:**

Color was applied only to the image. I selected a process blue, because it reflected the strong character of Rap and Produce. The image in blue was used on all pieces designed for the conference.

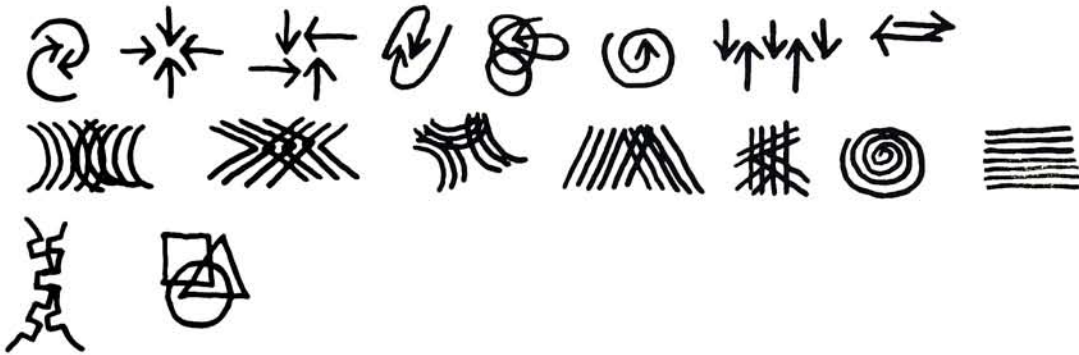
## SYMBOL ANALYSIS

## RAP AND PRODUCE

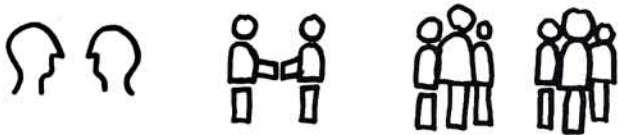
key points of RAP and Produce

- human interaction
  - talking; rapping
- community, citizen involvement
- starting point-for community involvement and positive change.

## • interaction



## • human interaction (community, citizen)



## • starting point



## • combining symbols

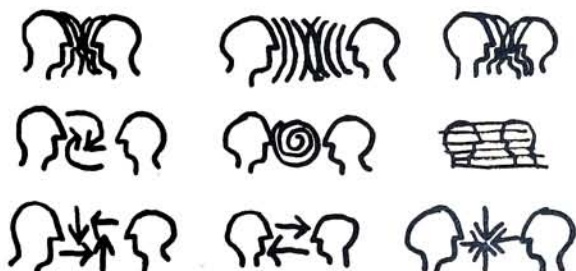
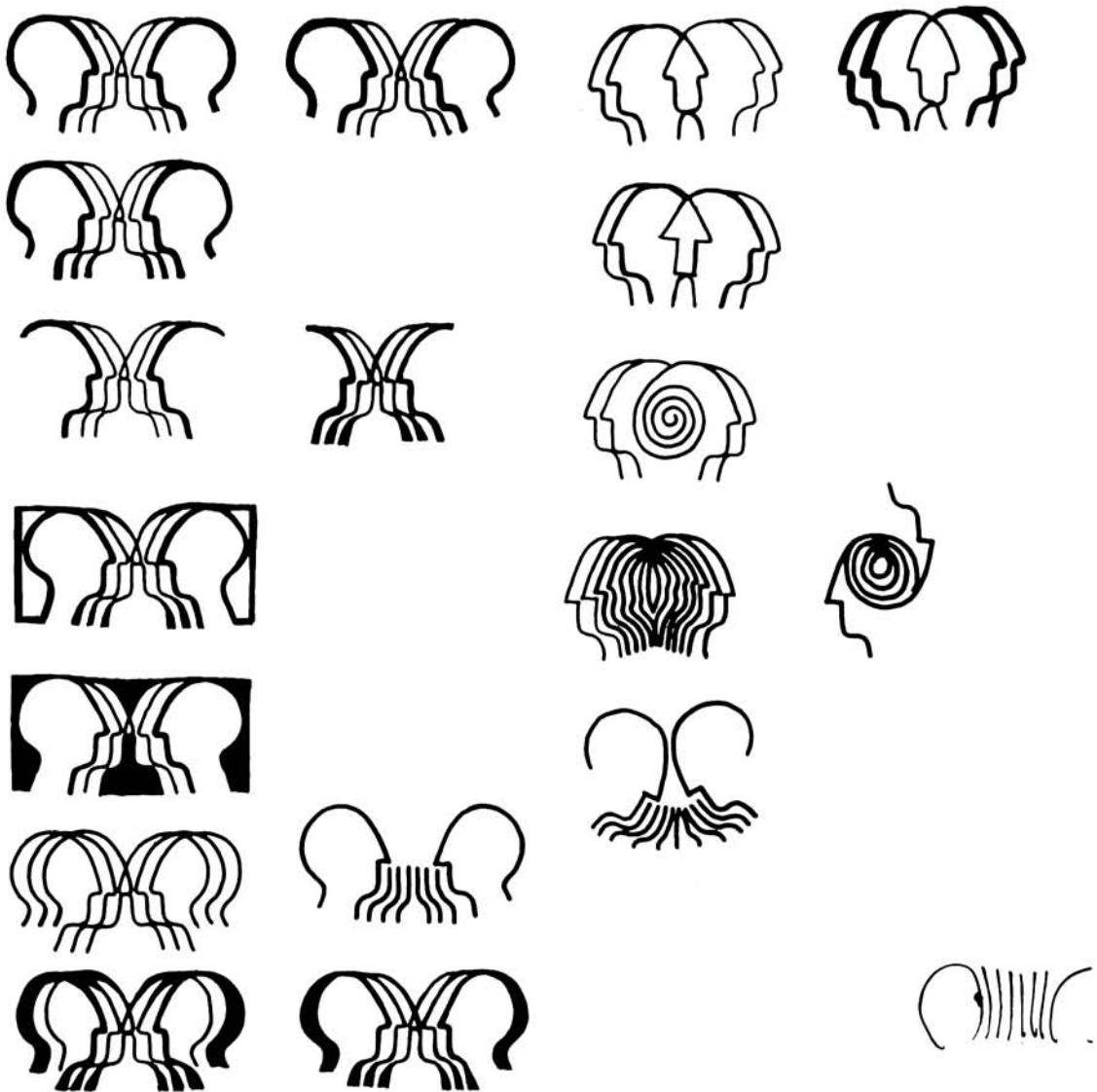
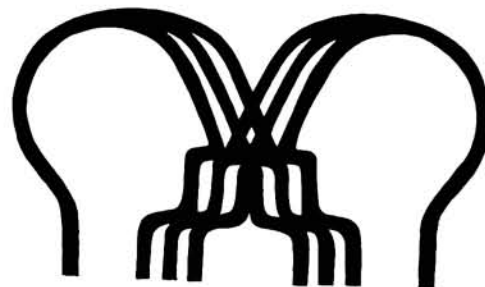
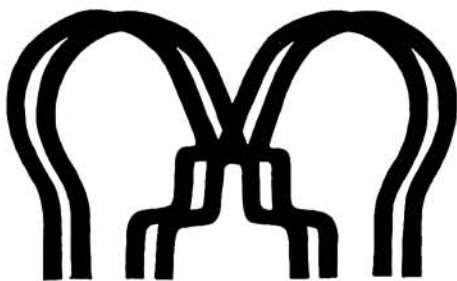
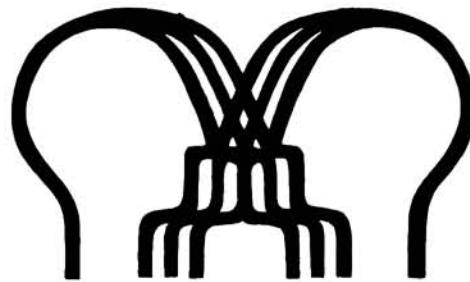
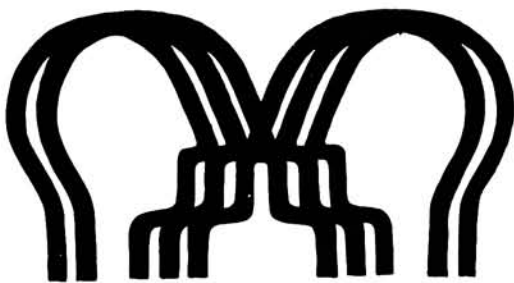
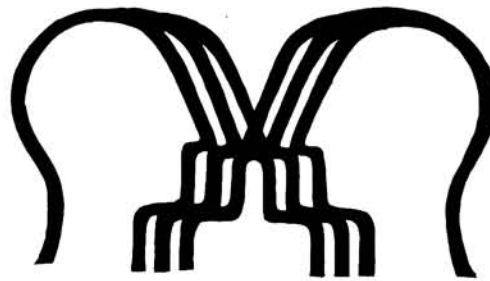
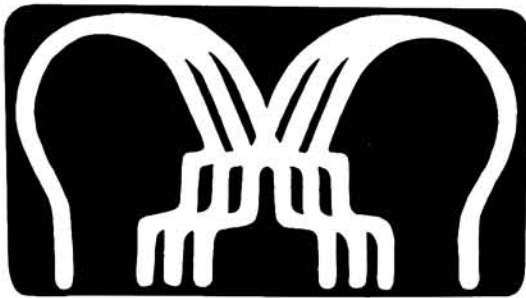
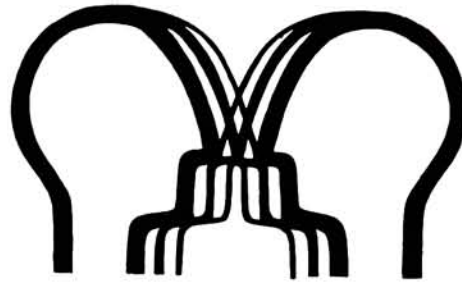
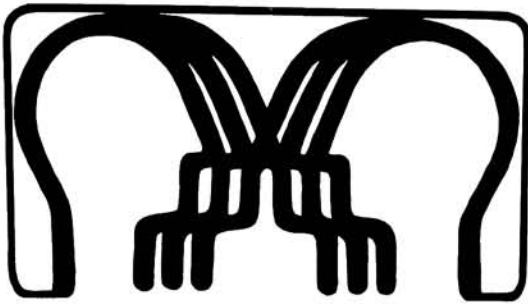
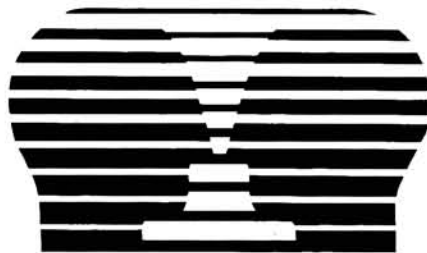
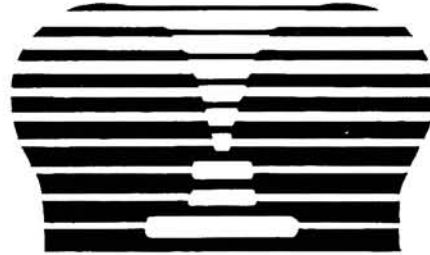
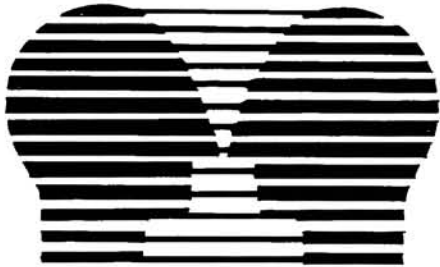
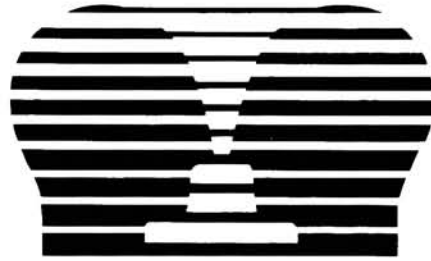




Figure 2









ApplicationsBrochure

**Objective:** The first piece that was designed for the conference was the Brochure. The objective of the brochure was first to promote the conference and second to provide information on the who, what, when and where of the conference. The brochure also provided a form for participants to register for the conference (Figure 6).

**Design and Production:** The cover was designed so that the image would be seen first, and the title "Rap and Produce" to be seen second. Helvetica was used as a type face to compliment the image, because of its contemporary simplicity as a sans-serif type face. The inside of the brochure had to provide a registration form which could be filled out, detached and returned.

The brochure was designed to fit in a size 10 envelope for mailing. A quantity of 4,000 brochures were printed on Warren's Patina Matte, 80 lb. It was printed by offset lithography by General Duplicating of RIT.

Rap and Produce (Round Five)

Workshops

Registration Form

**Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow:**  
A two-day workshop on community problems April 18 and 19, 1975.

**Purpose:**  
To provide a forum for community persons of all persuasions and backgrounds to come together in meaningful involvement for understanding and “road mapping” for change.

**For Whom:**  
Interested citizens of metropolitan Rochester and surrounding areas. We welcome past participants, leaders, and resource persons, as well as representatives of all institutions and agencies who would better serve their community.

**Format:**  
Each workshop is designed to examine a different problem area. The workshops run concurrently. Participants are asked to attend the same workshop during the entire conference.

**Where:**  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Metropolitan Center  
50 West Main Street, 2nd floor

**Time:**  
Friday, April 18, 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.  
Saturday, April 19, 8:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

**Fee:**  
\$10.00 will include workshop materials, coffee-breaks, lunch, and Social Hour. Special consideration will be given to participants 55 and over.

**Coordinators:**  
Jessie M. James, Program Coordinator  
RIT, Extended Services Division  
Office of Urban Extension  
Phone: 262-2729

Grace A. Law, Secretary  
Phone: 262-2740

Kay Adams, Consultant  
Monroe County Library System

**Conference Chairman:**  
I. Roy Rugless, Director  
ABC Youth Services

**Welcome:**  
Dr. Harold J. Alford, Dean  
RIT, College of Continuing Education

**Introduction:**  
Richard Morales, Genesee Finger Lakes  
Regional Planning Board

**Keynoter:**  
Mr. Roy Ortiz Fuentes, Director  
National Education Association for  
Migrant Education Project  
Washington, D.C.

**Things to Come: What about 1976?**  
**Rap is Me: Produce is You.**  
Representatives of all workshops will meet April 30, at 9:30 a.m., 50 West Main Street—Room-205.

- 1. Consumer Concerns**  
Current consumer-information on food-stamps, legislation and health frauds.
- 2. Criminal Justice**  
Stop, look, listen, and do. A glimpse of success—7th Step Foundation. Why not in New York State?
- 3. Transportation**  
How you get there from here? The new regional program: Fares, routes, information, input.
- 4. Community Based Education**  
The Urbanarium and Others . . . current and developing education programs and communications, leadership, management, community based planning, etc. For folks needing information, ordering input.
- 5. Parents and Students Rights**  
Information for laymen, social workers and community workers on the insights of parents and students in school issues.
- 6. Housing**  
Realities and Possibilities. Confused and Confusing issues and answers.
- 7. Funding Resources**  
Where the bucks are? Dollars and Cents-Able approaches.
- 8. Communications**  
Current issues and intra and inter communications systems up-date.
- 9. The Minority Experience**  
Full participation of minorities in economic opportunities, institutions, education, law, etc.
- 10. Governmental Structure**  
Know your city/county government and how to participate. Learn about two tier neighborhoods oriented government (The GRIP/NAPA Study).
- 11. Health**  
Prevention and accessibility. Prevention through education, accessibility through knowledge of resources.
- 12. Single Parent Families**  
Single parent families in dialogue social pressures problems, unmet needs that limit; information, resources, action strategies that offer support.
- 13. Life Long Learning**  
What should be available for life long learning? Retraining. Change roles. What value is college? Leisure-time activity.

Name
Address
Zip
Agency/Organization
Address
Zip
Position
Phone (day)

Some workshops will be limited: First come – first served. Please check first and second choice.

- Workshops**
- ☐ Consumer Concerns
  - ☐ Criminal Justice
  - ☐ Communications
  - ☐ Transportation
  - ☐ Community Based Education
  - ☐ Parents and Students Rights
  - ☐ Life Long Learning
  - ☐ Housing
  - ☐ Funding Resources
  - ☐ The Minority Experience
  - ☐ Governmental Structure
  - ☐ Health
  - ☐ Single Parent Families

Total registration fee per person is \$10.00. Deadline is April 16, 1975. Please make all checks payable to: Rochester Institute of Technology.

Mail to: Mrs. Jesse M. James, R.I.T., Urban Extension, 50 West Main St., Rochester, New York 14614.

Those wishing to register more than one person may do so on the back of this registration form.

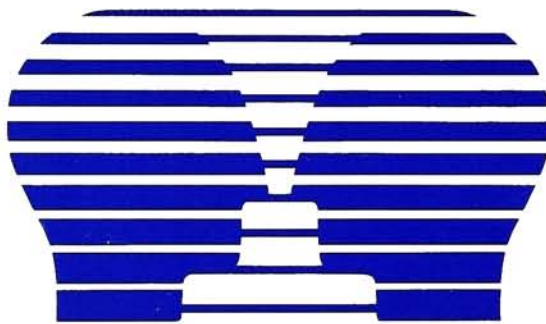
Signature
Date

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## Rap and Produce

---

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow



Extended Services Division,  
Urban Extension  
Rochester Institute of Technology

Co-Sponsored by  
Columbia Banking Saving  
and Loan Association

### Signage

**Objective:** Because of the large number of people the function of the signage was:

1. to reduce the confusion of where to go
2. to keep the flow of people moving, who were coming in and out of the 50 West Main building.

A grid format had to be developed to fit three different types of signage:

1. location (Figure 7)
2. direction (Figure 8)
3. identification of 13 different (Figure 9) workshops.

**Design and Production:** The size format of the signs were 10" x 17" to accommodate type at the top and the image at the bottom. The vertical format was used because of the space in which they had to be hung. The space on top of the signs provided for changes in typography, while the image remained constant at the bottom.

Silkscreen was the printing medium used. This method allowed me to produce a large quantity of signs, two colors, at a very small cost.



## Rap and Produce Conference

2nd Floor  
Room 219



Figure 7

## Rap and Produce Conference

2nd Floor  
Room 219



Figure 8

## Rap and Produce Workshop

Funding  
Resources



Figure 9

Name Tags

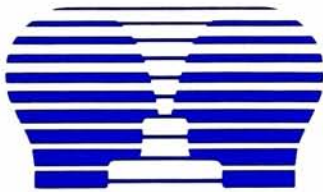
**Objective:** The name tags were designed for the purpose of identifying the members of the planning committee, resource persons, and speakers for the conference.

**Design and Production:** They were designed vertically to conform with the signage format. The type and image were placed in the same location as in the signage (Figure 10).

Production of the name tags was a problem because of the number of tags that had to be produced. Approximately 145 were produced by means of silkscreen and Kodalith overlay. The names of the persons were printed by hand.

### Rap and Produce

Yesterday, Today  
and Tomorrow



Folder

**Objective:** A folder was designed to hold the conference program and various handouts that were given at the conference.

**Design and Production:** Unfortunately, because of the quantity and printing costs, the folders could not be produced for the 700 participants. One folder was printed as a sample for my thesis. The format was 9½" x 12" with the Rap and Produce image silkscreened at the bottom (Figure 11).



### Photographic Summary

**Objective:** The final stage of my thesis was the photographic documentation of the conference.

My objectives were:

1. to capture the feeling and activity of the conference
2. to document my graphics in actual use.

The conference was very well organized. The people who were involved with Rap and Produce and participants, came with the intention of seriously addressing themselves to the problems of the community. Because of the tremendous concern that was generated throughout the conference, I was very much excited and pleased that I was part of this activity.

The photographs that follow give the feeling of the activity that went on during the two-day seminar (Figure 12).

One of the most exciting parts about my thesis was seeing how my graphics functioned during the conference.

The image was very well accepted as communicating the feeling and ideas of Rap and Produce. The brochures were an attractive compliment, and there were no problems with the layout and text being functional. I received many comments also about the practicality of the signage. The rooms were clearly identified and directions were easily

followed. The name tags seemed to be one of the nicest additions, because it made people feel a little more a part of Rap and Produce since their names were being associated with the image.



## Rap and Produce

### Purpose:

To provide a forum for community persons of all persuasions and backgrounds to come together in meaningful involvement for understanding and "road mapping" for change.

## Planning



## Registration





## Conference Opening



**Coordinator**  
Jesse M. James  
RIT, Extended Services  
Office of Urban Extension



**Conference Chairman:**  
I. Roy Rugless, Director  
ABC Youth Services



**Welcome**  
Dr. Harold J. Alford, Dean  
RIT, College of Continuing  
Education



**Introduction:**  
Richard Morales,  
Genesee Finger Lakes  
Regional Planning Board



**Keynote:**  
Mr. Roy Ortiz Fuentes, Director  
National Education Association for  
Migrant Education Project  
Washington, D.C.



## Workshops



## Workshops





## Awards



### Conclusion

I can best conclude this thesis by restating my objectives and reflect upon what was accomplished.

Objective 1: To research past and present involvements and operations of Rap and Produce.

The research was very important in the beginning stages because of the nature of Rap and Produce. Since their beginning in 1971 Rap and Produce has grown from a small program with a small group of interested citizens, to a large seminar involving important people from all over, interacting with citizens who are working for a change.

The past as well as the present themes of the conferences reflected this need for positive change. The theme this year was called "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow". This was a well chosen theme, for it put the findings of the first four years into practical application - on the job, in ones life and in the community - so the emphasis changed from "what" to "how".

Objective 2: To develop a thematic image for Rap and Produce's fifth annual Conference.

The image was the central part of my thesis, so its development was most important. The image served as a focal point to which all

the separate activities of the conference were related and directed under one image. It did the job and it did it well.

**Objective 3:** To define communication needs for the conference and produce them.

The individual pieces that were designed had to serve a function: Informing, directing and identifying the people of the conference. The evidence of the success of these pieces was clear at the beginning. The conference was well organized and the graphics contributed to the success and smooth operation of the conference.

**Final Note:** My thesis is a very important one, in that it was a real problem and not hypothetical. I had the opportunity to work with a number of interesting people who helped me very much.

It was a learning experience for me as well as the the people of Rap and Produce because this was the first time they had a graphic program done for them.

As a designer I learned to work with an organization that had some very real needs but little money available to implement a communication program. Problems of time, money and the number of people had to be dealt with. Communicating quickly and clearly to

a large audience is always a challenge and the experiences I learned through Rap and Produce will undoubtedly be helpful in my future involvements as a communication designer.